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The ABC

Both in Latyn & Englyſhe:

BEING

A *facſimile* reprint of the earlieſt extant Engliſh Reading Book.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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PREFACE.

THE following pages contain a *facſimile*, produced by photography, of what is believed to be a unique ſpecimen of one of the A B C Primers, publiſhed ſoon after the breach with Rome, in the reign of Henry VIII. It is now preſerved in the Library of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. The uſe of ſuch primers was, as the name implies, educational. They were to be the firſt books placed in the hands of a child, and to contain all that was neceſſary for him to know, to enable him to underſtand the rudiments of the Chriſtian Religion, and to join in the ſervices of the Church, and even to ſerve at Maſs, or, as it is called, 'to help a Prieſt to ſing.' Beginning, therefore, with the Alphabet,

it goes on to the firſt ſentence pronounced by the Prieſt, in Latin and Engliſh; then to Pater Noſter, alſo in Latin and Engliſh, and the Hail Mary, alſo in both languages, and concludes with certain prayers and graces to be uſed before and after meals.

This primer has no date; but it was printed by Thomas Petyt, 'at London, in Paules' Chyrch yarde, at the Sygne of the Mayden's head.' Thomas Petyt, or Petit, suppoſed to be a relation of a famous French printer John Petit, printed at London from 1536 to about 1554; and in 1538, among other things, printed 'The Pater Noſter, the Crede, and the Commandements of God, in Englyſhe, with many other Godly leſſons. Ryght neceſſary for youth and all other to lerne and know accordynge to the Commandements and Injunctions: gyven by thauctorite of the kynges hyghnes; through this his realme.'*

The preſent A B C may be regarded, perhaps, as an introduction to this larger primer; and

* Herbert's Ames, p. 553.

the late Mr. Bradſhaw, in a paper read before the Antiquarian Society, in May, 1875, expreſſed himſelf as 'ſatisfied that it muſt have been printed about 1538.' He alſo mentions other editions of the A B C: I., in London, by William Powell, without date, but probably about 1547; II., in London, by John Day, without date, but by internal evidence ſhown to have been printed between March and July, 1553; III., one printed in Dublin, in Engliſh and Iriſh, for the Stationers' Company, in 1631.

The object of primers, to which the A B C was thus a kind of introduction, and what they were expected to contain, is ſet forth in the preface to 'thenglyſh primer,' publiſhed by authority in 1535:

'It was never ordeyned, o good reder, without the ſingler providence, and moſte abundaunt grace of almightie god, that the multitude of chriſtn people ſhuld lerne by herte the ten commaundements of almightie god, the beleve, called the Crede, and the prayer of the lorde, called the Pater noſter. For truely he that under-

ſtandeth theſe thre, hath the pythe of all thoſe thynges, whiche holy ſcripture doth conteyne, and whatſoever may be taught neceſſarily unto a faithfull chriſtian, and that not only purely and plentifully, but thereto ſo briefly and clerely, that no man can compleyne, or excuſe hymſelfe juſtly, ſyth that knowledge, which is of neceſſity required to the atteyninge of the lyfe eternall, is neither tedious, no yet harde, but that it may be well had and goten of all that have grace.'*

It will be ſeen that the three things ſet down as neceſſary are, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. But the A B C primer here reproduced omits the Commandments, as probably did others. Accordingly, in an Engliſh primer of 1545-6, printed by Richard Grafton, 'printer and ſervaunte to our moſte dereſt ſonne Prince Edward, with Edward Whitechurch, citizen of London,' this defect is ſupplied; though the Commandments are given in a ſhortened form—the fourth, for inſtance,

* Imprynted at London, in Fleteſtreet, by John Byddell, for William Marſhall, 1535.

conſiſting of one clauſe, 'Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath daye'; and the fifth only 'Honor thy father and thy mother'; while the tenth begins, 'Thou ſhalt not unjuſtly desire.'*

The words of the Royal injunction attached to this and other official primers will beſt indicate the poſition of the unauthorized A B C primers, ſuch as that here reproduced:

'Among the manifolde buſineſs an moſt weightie affaires appertaining to our regal authoritie and office, we much tenderyng the youthe of our realmes, (whoſe good education and vertuous bringing up redouneth moſt highly to ye honoure and prayſe of almyghtie God) for divers good conſiderations, and ſpecially for that the youth by divers perſonnes are taught the Pater Noſter, Ave Maria, Crede, and X Commandementes, al in Latin, and not in Engliſh, by meanes whereof the ſame are not brought up in ye knowledg of ther faith, duties and obedi-

* The copy in the Emmanuel Library is imperfect; part of the Calendar is loſt, and if it had the A B C, that is loſt alſo.

ence, wherein no Chriſten perſon ought to be ignoraunt. And for that oure people and ſubjectes whych have no underſtanding in the Latin tong and yet have the knowledge of readyng, may praye in theyr vulgar tong, which is to them beſt knowne: that by the meane thereof thei ſhuld be the more provoked to true devotion, and the better ſet their hartes upō thoſe thinges that they pray for. And finally, *for the avoyding of the diverſitie of primer books that ar now abrod, wherof ar almoſt innumerable ſortes*, which mynister occaſion of contentions and vain diſputations, rather then to edify, and to have one uniforme ordre of al ſuch bookes throughout al our dominions, both to be taught unto children and alſo to be uſed for ordinary prayers of all our people not learned in the latyn tong: have ſet furth thys Primer or boke of prayers in Englyſh to be frequented and uſed in and throughout all places of oure ſaid realmes and dominions, as well of the elder people, as alſo of the youth, for their common and ordinary prayers, willing, commaundyng

and ſtreghtly chargyng that for the better bringing up of youth in the knowledge of theyr duty towardes God, their prince, and all others in their degre, every Scholemaſter and bringer-up of yong beginners in lernyng nexte after their A B C *now bi us alſo ſet furthe*, do teache this primer or boke of ordinary prayers unto them in Englyſhe, and that the youth cuſtomably and ordinarily uſe the ſame until thei be of competent underſtanding and knowledge to perceive it in Latyn. At which time they may at their libertie ether uſe this primer in Engliſhe, or that whiche is by oure authoritie likewyſe made in the Latyn tong, in all poinctes correſpondent unto this in Englyſhe.'

This paſſage ſtates fully the object of ſuch A B C primers, namely, to ſerve as an elementary reading-book, and a firſt book of religious inſtruction for children, as well as of ordinary prayers for adults. It alſo ſhows that, beſides the authorized editions, numberleſs others were publiſhed, differing in details, according as their authors were more or leſs

inclined to depart from the old formularies or doctrines. The attempt to confine the people to the uſe of one authorized primer was, doubtleſs, unſucceſsful; and in fact, the words of the Act, 34-5 Henry VIII., 'for the advancement of the true religion and for the aboliſhment of the contrary,' ſeems to except Pſalter, Primers, Pater Noſter, Ave, and Creede in Engliſh, from among thoſe books that were not to be read by 'women, artificers, 'prentiſes, journeymen, ſerving-men of the degree of yeomen or under, huſbandmen nor labourers.'

This book, then, is the earlieſt known ſpecimen of this claſs of unauthorized primers, containing the alphabet, and the prayers and elementary religious formularies uſed in the teaching of children and the daily life of home.

The A B C.

¶ The. B A C bothe in latyn and in Englysshe.

✠ A a b c d e f g h j k l m n o p q r ſ s t v u x y z & ꝯ est Amen.

a e i o u a e i o u

ab eb ib ob ub ba be bi bo bu

ae ee ie oe ue ca ce ci co cu

ad ed id od ud da de di do du

af ef if of uf fa fe fi fo fu

ag eg ig og ug ga ge gi go gu

In nomine patris & filij & spiritus sancti. Amen. ¶ In the name of the Father and of the Sone and of the holy ghost. Amen.

Pater noster qui es in celis sanctificetur nomen tuũ. Aduenat regnum tuum Fiat voluntas tua sicut in celo et in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie. Et dimitte nobis debita nostra/ sicut et

nos dimittimꝰ debitoribus nostris.
Et ne nos inducas in temptacionē.
Sed libera nos a malo. Amen.

OUr father which art in heuen
halowed be thy name Let thi
kyngdome come to vs. Thy wyl be
fulfylled as well in earth/ as it is in
heuen. Gyue vs this day our dayly
fode. And forgyue vs our offences/
as we forgyue them that offend vs.
And let vs not be ouercom by tēpta
cyō. but deliuer vs frō all euell. Amē

AVe maria gratia plena dñs tecū
Benedicta tu in mūlieribꝰ/ et be
nedictus fructus ventris tui Jēsus.

HAyle Mary full of grace/ our
lorde is with the/ blysſed arte
thou amonge all womē/ & blyſſed is
the fruyte of thy wombe Jesus Amē

CRedo in deū patrem omnipo
tentem creatorem celi et terre

Et in Jesum christũ filiu eius vnicu
dominu nostru. Qui coceptus est de
spiritusancto nat⁹ ex maria virgine
passus sub poncio pilato crucifixus
mortuus & sepultus. Descēdit ad in
ferna: tertia die resurrexit a mortuis
Ascēdit ad celos sedet ad dexteram
dei patris omnipotentis. Inde ven-
turus est iudicare viuos et mortuos
Credo in spiritum sanctũ/ sanctam
ecclesiam catholicã/ sanctor cõmuni
onem/ remissionẽ peccatorũ / carnis
resurrectionẽ et vitam eternã Amen.

I Byleue in God the Father al
myghtye creatour of heuen &
earth. And in his onely sone Jesus
Christe our lorde. Whiche was con
ceyued by the holy ghost/ and borne
of the virgyn Mary. Which suffred
vnder Ponce Pylate/ and was cru-
cyfyed and dyed/ and was buryed. ¶

And descended in to the helles/ and
rose agayne the thyrde day fro deth
to lyfe. And ascended in to the heuēs
& sytteth on the ryght hande of the
father almyghty. And shal come a-
gayne/ & iudge both quycke & dead.
I byleue in the holy ghost/ and the
holy chyrch catholyke/ the holy com
munyon of sayntes/ & the remyssion
of synnes/ & the generall resurrecyō
of the body & soule/ and euerlastyng
lyfe. Amē. To helpe a prest to syng.
Confitemini dño quoniam bonus:
Quōniā in seculū misericordia eius
Confiteor deo/ beate Marie/
omnibus sāctis et vobis/ quia
peccaui nimis cogitatione locutione
et opere mea culpa. Precor sanctam
Mariā/ oēs sanctos dei et vos orare
pro me. Misereatur vestri omnipo-
tens deus/ et dimittat vobis omnia

peccata vestra: liberet vos ab omni
malo saluet et confirmet in bono et
perducat vos ad vitã eternã. Amen
Adiutorium nostrum in nomine
domini. Qui fecit celum et terram.
Sit nomen dñi benedictũ. Ex hoc
nunc & vsq; in seculũ. Kyrye eleyson
Xpe eleyson. Kyrye eleyson. ¶ Se
quentia sancti euangelij secundum/
Marcũ/Matheũ/Lucã/Johannẽ.
Gloria tibi dñe. Per omnia secula
seculorũ. Amen. Dñs vobiscũ. Et
cum spiritu tuo. Sursum corda. Habe=
mus ad dñm. Gratias agam⁹ dño
deo nostro. Dignum et iustum est.
Pax domini sit semper vobiscũ. Et
cum spiritu tuo. Ita missa est. Deo
gratias. Requiescãt in pace. Amen.

¶ Grace to be sayd before dyner.

Benedicite. Dñs. The eyes of
euery thynge do loke vp/ and

they hope in the good lorde / & thou
gyuest them they r fode in tyme con-
tenient. Thou openest thy hande &
doest replenysshe euery sensyble cre-
ature with thy benedicyon. O lor-
de to the father / to the sone / & to the
holighost. As it was in the begyn
nynge / & as it is nowe & euer shall
be. Amē. Lorde haue mercy on vs.
Chryste haue mercy on vs. Lorde
haue mercy on vs. Our father. &c.
And let vs not be ouercōme by tem
ptacyon. But delyuer vs from all
euyll Amen. Nowe let vs all pray.
O ood lorde blysse vs & all thy gyft
whith we shal receyue of the by thy
bounteousnesse thorowe Chryst our
lorde Amen. O lorde commaunde
thou to blysse. The kynge of eter-
nall glory make vs to be pertenars
of the celestyall mele. Amen.

God is charite / & he that dwelleth in charite dwelleth in god/and god dwelleth in hym. Let vs pray that god maye dwell in vs/ and that we may dwell in hym. Amen.

¶ Grace after dyner.

The god of peace & loue dwell alwaye with vs. O Lorde haue mercy on vs. Thankes be to god. Good lorde let all thy workes gyue knowledge to the / and let thy holy sayntes gyue blyssynge to the. Glory be to the father. &c.

We gyue thankes to the almyghty god for all thy vnyuersall gyftes & benefites/ whiche lyuest & reygneste as god thoroughout all the worlde of wordes Amen.

O all ye nacyons laude ye the lorde
And all ye people praysse ye hym
Bycause his mercye is cõfyrmed on

vs and the trueth of our lorde doth
remayne eternally. O lory be to ꝛc.
Lorde haue mercy on vs. Chryste
haue mercy on vs. Lorde haue mer
cy on vs. Our father which art. ꝛc.
Chryste dyd dystrybute goodes / ꝛ
gaue it to the poore. His iustice
abydeth in the worlde of worldes.
I shall blysse our Lorde in euerye
tyme. His prayse be euermore in
my mouthe. My soule shalbe pray
sed in our lorde. Let them that be
gentyll heare/ ꝛ they shall therof be
glad. Magnifye ye the lorde with
me/ ꝛ let vs exalte his name withyn
hym selfe. Blysfed be the name of
our lorde frõ the begyñynge. Now/
and euer throughe out the worlde.
Hayle Mary. Nowe let vs praye.
Vouchsafe thou lorde god to gyue
eternall lyfe vnto al people doynge

good to vs for thy holy name. Amē
Let vs blysse our lorde. Thāks be
to our lorde god. God graunt that
the soules of all faythfull people de-
parted out of this worlde / by his
mercy may rest in eternal lyfe Amē
God preserue his chyrch vnyuersal
And this chyrch of england speciall
And the supreme heed therof oure
kynge. And graunt vs the blysse
without endynge. Amen.

¶ Grace for fyll the dayes.

Benedicite. Dominus. God
graūt that they that are pore
in spiryte may fede and they shalbe
satyfyed: they that seke hym / theyr
hertes and myndes shal lyue in the
worlde of worldes. Glory be to ꝛc.
Lorde haue merry on vs. ꝛc. Our
father which art. Let vs pray ꝛc.
God lorde blysse vs. ꝛc. O lorde

commaunde thou to blysse. The eternall kynge of glory refresshe vs w' the meate of thy spirituall fode. The grace of our lorde Jesu christ the charyte of god/the communyon of the holye ghoste/be euer with vs all Amen. Breake to the hungry thy breade. And bryngе the nedy men and wanderyng men into thy house. When thou sest one bare couer hym/ and dysprayse not thyne owne brothers body.

Thus the almyghty lorde sayeth

Grace after dyner.

The God of pease and of lone dwell alway with vs. The mercyfull god gyuer of mercy hath made a memory of his meruels. He hathe gyuen meate to all them that drede hym. O Ibry be to the father. We gyue thankes to the ꝛc.

¶ A shorte grace to be sayd before dyner.

THe ryght hande of god blysse our meate now brought hyther and to be brought hyther. In the name of the father/ & the sone &c.

¶ An other grace to be sayd before dyner or souper.

BEnedicite. Dñs. Good lorde for thy grace mekely we call. Blesse vs our meates & drynkes all In the name of the father. & cetera

¶ A shorte grace after dyner.

FOr this feest now let vs blys our lorde. Thanks be to god Hayle Mary. &c. Nowe let vs all pray &c. Vouchsafe. &c. Let vs all blysse our lorde. Thanks be to god God graunt &c. God preserue. &c.

¶ An other grace to be sayde after dyner or souper.

BLysſed be our lorde which of his grace. Hath ſende vs our fode/good tyme/and ſpace.
Lorde haue mercy on vs. Chryſte haue mercy. ꝛc. Thankes be to god.
Laude and prayſe / honoure / and glory. Be to that lord that reygneth on hye. Whoſe great mercy is euer redy. To all them that for it call.
Therfore laude be to hym eternall.
Nowe blysſed be the name of oure lorde. Nowe and euer thorowe out the worlde. Amen. God preſerue his chyrche vniuerſall. ꝛc.

¶ Grace before ſouper.

BEnedicite. Dominꝰ. He that gyueth all thynge / now ſanctify our ſouper. In the name of. ꝛc.

¶ Grace after ſouper.

BEnedicite. Dominꝰ. Blysſed is god in all his gyftes / and

holy in all his workes. Let hym be our helpe in the name of god which hath made heuen and earth.
Blysled be the name.&c. Vouch.&c.

¶ Grace at Ester afore dyner.

Benedicite. Dominus. This is the day whiche our Lorde made/let vs ioye and be glad in the same. Glorye be to the. &c. Lorde haue mercy on vs&c. And let vs not &c. Nowe let vs. &c. Good lorde &c. O lorde.&c. The kinge of. &c.
Cast ye out clene the olde leuen that ye maye be newe dowgh as ye are the swete brede/for Christ our Ester Lambe is offered for vs/therfore let vs fede in our lorde. Amen.

¶ Grace after dyner at Ester

Onfesse your selfes to the god of heuen whiche gyueth fode to every sensyble creature O thou

good lorde ꝛc. Thankes be to god
O all ye nacyons laude ye the lorde
Bycause his mercy is confirmed on
vs ꝛc. Glory be to the father. ꝛc.
O Chryste / in thy resurrecyon the
heuens and the earth be glad.

¶ Let vs pray.

GOod lorde infude the spiryte
of thy charyte in vs / that by
thy pite thou mayst make vs agre-
able to those thynges whiche thou
haste made by thy holy pascall Sa-
cramentes. By that same our lorde
Jesu Chryst thy sone which lyueth
and reyneth with the as god in the
vnite of the same holy spiryte by all
the worlde of worldes. Amen.

The ten cõmaundementes.

LOrd graut me grace to honor the
One god & neuer to swere in vayne
The holy day to be kepte by me.

My parentes to obey & mayntayne
My thought ne dede no man to kyll
To robbe nor to steale no where
Nor to do lechery in acte or wyll
Be no lyer/ nor false wytnesse bere
Nor to desyre my neyghbours wyfe
His landes/ seruauntes/ or catell
These x. preceptes lorde all my lyfe
Graũt me grace I maye kepe well.
¶ The vij. works of mercy bodily.
God gyue me grace the sicke to visit
And gyue them mete that be hũgry
To them that thurste drynke to fet
And prisoners to redeme and bye
To clothe the naked euermore redy
To pore wãderers to gyue lodging
And to bryngye the deed to buryyng.
¶ The vij. works of mercy ghostly
God graũt I may good cosel gyue
And teche them that ygnorauunt be
To comforte them that be pensyue

And to correcte with charyte
To suffer in all aduersyte
My neyghbors trespas to forgyue
And to pray for grace whyle I lyue

¶ The. vij. Capitall synnes.

Good lorde graunt me pryde to for
And not to syn in couetous (sake
Nor slouth / but in good workes to
wake
Nor to be wrath nor furyous
Nor bysdaynous nor enuyous
Nor for to synne in glotony
Nor in no carnall Lechery.

Thus endeth the. A B C translated out of Latein to to Englysshe with other deuoute Prayers.

¶ Imprynted at Londō in Paules Chyrche yarde at the sygne of the maydens heed by thomas Petyt.